

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 PM-03 INR-05
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0458

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GY
SUBJECT: THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND FONMIN WILLS' TRIP TO US

REF: (A) GEORGETOWN 0436, (B) GEORGETOWN 0363,
(C) GEORGETOWN 0334

SUMMARY: FONMIN WILLS HAD REPORTED THAT RECENT HOSTILE PRESS ARTICLES HAVE REKINDLED SUSPICIONS THAT USG OFFICIALS MIGHT BE DELIBERATELY PLANTING STORIES TO EMBARRASS BURNHAM AND GUYANA. PRESSURES HAVE BEEN GENERATED FOR HIM TO CALL OFF HIS TRIP BUT HE HAS NO INTENTION OF THAT. HE SAYS HIS OBJECTIVES ARE GOOD RELATIONS AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THE RECRIMINATIONS OF LAST OCTOBER STILL GANKLE SOME GUYANESE LEADERS AND ACCORDING TO WILLS, MAKE MORE DIFFICULT THE JOB OF ACHIEVING A RECONCILIATION WITH US. END SUMMARY.

1. WILLS CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE LATE FEB. 28 TO RESUME OUR MUCH POSTPONED DISCUSSION OF HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON, BUT SPENT MUCH OF AN HOUR TALKING OTHER MATTERS.

2. HE STARTED OUR CONVERSATION BY RELATING PROBLEMS HE HAD ENCOUNTERED WITH BURNHAM AND PNC RADICALS (PARTICULARLY EXECU-
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TIVE SECRETARY MCDAVID) OVER THE "SOFTNESS" OF THE PRESS RELEASE ON BURNHAM/CIA STORY (REF A). HOWEVER, TO HIS SURPRISE, HE SAID, HE HAD BEEN SUPPORTED BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE SHIRLEY FIELD-RUDLEY AND MINISTER OF CO-OPERATIVES AND NATIONAL MOBILIZATION HAMILTON GREEN. FIELD-RIDLEY WAS NOW SUDDENLY "TWO MILES" TO THE RIGHT OF HIM AND GREEN WAS COMPLAINING ABOUT CUBAN INFLUENCE IN GUYANA. WILLS WAS

PLEASED OVER THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

3. THE FEB. 28 NEWSWEEK ARTICLE BY BORCHGRAVE HAD PROVOKED A SHARP REACTION IN PNC AND GOG, AND A REPLY WOULD BE ISSUED. THE REPLY, WHICH WAS BEING DRAFTED, WOULD BE DISCUSSED AND APPROVED IN MARCH 1 CABINET MEETING. WILLS SAID THAT QUESTIONS WERE BEING RAISED BY PARTY OFFICIALS ABOUT WHETHER HE SHOULD VISIT WASHINGTON IN VIEW OF THESE HOSTILE ARTICLES IN US PRESS. SOME OFFICIALS SUSPECTED THAT THE ARTICLES WERE INSPIRED BY OFFICIAL NEWS LEAKS. I REPLIED THAT SUCH SUSPICIONS MAKE NO SENSE, AND WILLS ASSERTED THAT LOGIC DISAPPEARED WHEN EMOTIONS WERE INVOLVED. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT BE DETERRED FROM HIS VISIT.

4. OF THE VISIT, HE SAID HE WOULD DEPART HERE MARCH 5 AND SPEND THE WEEKEND IN NEW YORK. HIS FIANCEE WOULD ACCOMPANY HIM. ON MARCH 7, THEY WOULD TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON. HE ADDED PETER HALDER TO THE LIST OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE DEPARTMENT (REF B) AND SAID SEARWAR WOULD NOT BE WITH HIM. HE COMMENTED THAT HE TRUSTS HALDER'S REPORTING ACCURACY MORE THAN AMBASSADOR MANN'S REPORTING.

5. WILLS IS STILL STRUCTURING HIS APPROACH FOR USE IN WASHINGTON AND HAS SAID HE WANTS ANOTHER TALK WITH ME ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO. HE HAS TOLD ME, HOWEVER, THAT HIS MAIN OBJECTIVES WILL BE TO:

(A) ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH SECRETARY VANCE AND WITH THE US UNDER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION;

(B) CONVINCE THE US THAT A SOCIALIST AND NON-ALIGNED
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GUYANA WILL P OB THREAT TO US SECURITY INTERESTS;
(C) OBTAIN A COMMITMENT FROM THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION THAT IT ACCEPTS AND COULD COLLABORATE (READ ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE) WITH GUYANA, PROVIDED THAT GUYANA IN NO WAY ALLIES ITSELF WITH THE ENEMIES OF THE US AND THAT GUYANA DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE HOSTILITY TO US INTERESTS OR VERBALLY ATTACK THE US;
(D) OBTAIN A COMMITMENT THAT THE US WILL PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO GUYANA.

6. WILLS HAS ALSO SAID THAT THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE THAT THOSE IN THE GOG FACE IN GETTING BROAD APPROVAL OF POSITIVE ACTIONS TOWARD THE US ARE THE BAD FEELINGS THAT STILL EXIST AMONG SOME OF THE CABINET AND PARTICULARLY IN THE PARTY OVER THE "BALD FACED LIES" STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN. PEOPLE HAD NOTED THAT CASTRO HAD SAID MUCH WORSE THINGS THREE DAYS BEFORE BURNHAM HAD MADE HIS SPEECH AND THE USG HAD NOT RESPONDED PUBLICLY IN ANY WAY. THE OPPONENTS OF RECONCILIATION, HE SAID, ARGUE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT SLAPPED BACK AT BURNHAM BECAUSE HE IS BLACK, WHEREAS

CASTRO, A WHITE, WAS ACCORDED MORE RESPECT.

7. I HAD HEARD THIS RATIONALE BEFORE AND REFUTED IT, EXPLAINING THAT ONE REASON FOR A STRONGER RESPONSE TO BURNHAM'S SPEECH WAS THAT IT CAME FROM THE LEADER OF A COUNTRY WITH WHICH THE US HAD NORMAL RELATIONS AND TO WHICH SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD GIVEN PERSONAL ASSURANCES THAT THE US WAS NOT INVOLVED WITH THE CUBANA AIRLINER SABOTEURS. WILLS UNDERSTOOD THAT, BUT SAID THAT HE STILL HAD A PROBLEM WITH HOYTE, MCDAVID AND OTHERS WHO WERE OVERLY SENSITIVE ABOUT BURNHAM'S PRIDE--AND BURNHAM HIMSELF STILL SMARTED SOMEWHAT FROM THE AFFAIR. IF HE (WILLS) COULD BRING BACK SOME PRIVATE INDICATION TO BURNHAM THAT THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION DID NOT ENDORSE THE "BALD FACED LIES" ALLEGATION, MUCH OF THE OPPOSITION HE FACES COULD BE DISSOLVED. I TOLD WILLS THAT I DOUBTED THAT HE WOULD GET ANY SUCH INDICATION.

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8. COMMENT: NO QUESTION EXISTS THAT IN SOME MINDS HERE THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO BURNHAM'S SPEECH WAS BASED UP DISRESPECT FOR A BLACK LEADER. ENEMIES OF RECONCILIATION WITH THE US PLAY ON THAT THEME WHETHER THEY THEMSELVES BELIEVE IT OR NOT. IN REALITY WILLS' OBJECTIVES IN WASHINGTON WILL REVOLVE AROUND ONE THING--ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. IF THE GOG WERE NOT IN THE THROES OF AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION, WILLS WOULD NOT SUBMIT HIMSELF TO THDIEMBARRASSMENT OF SEEKING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WITHOUT ALLOWING A DECENT INTERVAL TO PASS SINCE THE LOW EBB IN US-GOG RELATIONS. EACH TIME HE RAISEA THE ISSUE, I HAVE RESPONDED IN THE SAME MANNER AS DURING OUR FEB. 11 MEETING (REF C), I.E. I HAVE DAMPENED HIS HOPES, WHILE INDICATING I DID NOT HAVE ANY DEFINITE INFORMATION ON HOW THE USG WOULD REACT. END COMMENT.

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